

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Week 233 – 1 John 3:11-4:16a

Day 1161: 1 John 3:11-18

Verse 11

Ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἠκούσατε ἀπὸ ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους·

"John now introduces the basis for the statement which he made in v 10. Mutual love is the content of the good news heard from the very beginning ... Therefore the true child of God must not only renounce sin (3:4–9), but also demonstrate his divine origin by obeying the command to love." Smalley.

ἀγγελία, ας f message, news;
command

Some MSS read ἐπαγγελία rather than ἀγγελία (found in NT only here and at 1:5). This is clearly the result of careless copying with a more common word replacing a less familiar one.

ἠκούσατε ἀπὸ ἀρχῆς i.e. from the start of their hearing of the gospel – it has been central to the message they heard.

ἀλλήλων, οἰς, οὗς reciprocal pronoun one another

Cf. John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17. This is firstly a demand to love within the community of the people of God – but it is not to stop there. Like the love of God it is to be shown also to those not yet drawn to him.

Verse 12

οὐ καθὼς Κáιν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ· καὶ χάριν τίνος ἔσφαξεν αὐτόν; ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν, τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια.

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

'the case is not with us as it was with Cain; he was of the evil one...'

σφαζω slaughter, put to death
χαριν prep with gen for the sake of,
because of

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

From the beginning there was enmity between those who are children of God (the righteous) and those who are of the evil one.

Smalley comments, "The contrast between Cain's attitude and that of his brother provides John with a paradigm, as we discover from the passage which follows (vv 13–18). For the disobedient hatred of Cain is regarded as typical of the world (v 13), while Abel's righteousness (it is suggested) should characterize the loving community of the Christian Church (v 14). More than that, John probably finds in the behavior of the two brothers prototypes of the heretical and orthodox groups within his own congregation."

Verse 13

[καὶ] μὴ θαυμάζετε, ἀδελφοί, εἰ μισεῖ ὑμᾶς ὁ κόσμος.

καὶ is omitted by some MSS. Metzger writes concerning the UBS Text, "It is difficult to decide whether καὶ was added by copyists in order to provide a closer connection with what goes before; or whether, because of the preceding word (δικαία), copyists accidentally omitted καὶ. The majority of the committee preferred to retain the word in the text, but to enclose it within square brackets in order to indicate considerable doubt that it belongs there."

θαυμαζω wonder, be amazed

Cf. John 5:28.

μισεω hate, despise

Cf. 4:11; 5:9; John 15:18. Smalley thinks that the present tense μισεῖ suggests "that John is here describing a present fact, not a future possibility."

Verse 14

ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι μεταβηθήκαμεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν, ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς· ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ.

The reverse of vv. 12-13 is now expressed.

οἶδα know

μεταβηθήκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl
μεταβαινω leave, move, cross over

θανατος, ου m death

ζωη, ης f life

"Death and life are regarded as two spheres in which men move." Westcott. Smalley writes that they, "represent the alternative spiritual dominions to which man may give his allegiance." Cf. John 5:24.

Some MSS (8 Vg, et al) add ἡμῶν after τοῦς ἀδελφούς. This appears to be a secondary expansion.

Smalley comments, "The present tense of the verb ἀγαπῶμεν ('we love') indicates that the need for brotherly love, as a mark of those who belong to God's family and are his children, is constant."

Some texts (C K Ψ et al) add τὸν ἀδελφόν to μὴ ἀγαπῶν while some include also αὐτοῦ after ἀδελφον. These appear to be natural expansions.

μενει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ "It is not said that he dies. Death is his natural state." Westcott.

Verse 15

πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστίν, καὶ οἶδατε ὅτι πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν.

"There are Cain's in the new family." Westcott.

ἀνθρωποκτονος, ου m murderer

Marshall writes, "John takes up the thought implied in Matthew 5:21f. and states quite bluntly that hatred is tantamount to murder. Hatred is the wish that the other person was not there; it is the refusal to recognise his rights as a person, the longing that he might be dead. We may not like to put the point quite so frankly, but it is good that the real character of hatred should be so unambiguously displayed, so as to warn us against it. If I hate somebody, I am no different from a murderer in my attitude toward him." Cf. Jn 8:44 where the word is used of the devil.

αἰωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

Verse 16

ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκεν· καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς θεῖναι.

ἐγνώκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl
γινωσκω

The perfect suggests that the reference is to a particular historical event.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο that (one), he, she, it

ψυχη, ης f self, life, 'soul'

ἔθηκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s τιθημι
place, set

'lay down', cf. Jn 10:11,15,17ff.; 13:37ff.; 15:13.

ὀφειλω owe, ought, must, be obligated

The present tense suggests a continuing obligation.

θεῖναι Verb, aor act infin τιθημι

"The cross is an example to copy, and not simply a revelation of love to admire." Smalley.

Verse 17

ὃς δ' ἂν ἔχη τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου καὶ θεωρῇ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχοντα καὶ κλείση τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ;

The obligation to love is not something vague and theoretical but is expressed in practical and down-to-earth ways.

ὃς ἂν whoever

βιος, ου m life, living, possessions

"The phrase includes all the endowments which make up our earthly riches, wealth, station, intellect." Westcott.

θεωρω see, observe, notice

χρεια, ας f need, want

κλείση Verb, aor act subj, 3 s κλειω
shut, shut up, lock

σπλαγχνον, ου n affections, heart

Cf. Ps 77:9 (76:10 LXX).

ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ "It is not certain whether John means 'God's love channeled through us,' or 'our love for God,' or (as is most probable) 'the type of love shown by God'." Marshall.

Verse 18

Τεκνία, μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μηδὲ τῇ γλώσσῃ ἀλλὰ ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ.

τεκνιον, ου n little child, child

μηδε negative particle nor, and not, neither

γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language, speech

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

For the contrast between lip-service and action in the life of the believer cf. Matt 7:21; Jas 1:22-25; 2:14-17.

Day 1162: 1 John 3:19-24**Verses 19-24**

Marshall writes, "This passage can be regarded as the conclusion to the preceding part of the letter and also as a bridge to the remaining part. Its main purpose is to give assurance to the readers, on the basis of which they may have confidence to approach God in prayer. Yet, although John emphasises that our assurance ultimately depends on God himself, nevertheless he insists that we must continue to keep his commands to believe in Jesus and to love one another. When we do this, the Spirit inwardly assures us of our spiritual position. The passage is a difficult one to follow, since it relates the divine and human aspects of assurance in a paradoxical fashion." Smalley similarly writes, "The general sense of vv 19-24 is clear enough, even if the Greek expression occasionally presents problems. Six points are made: (a) the practice of love is a guarantee of Christian sonship; (b) so is God's knowledge of the believer; (c) a clear conscience enables the Christian to enjoy a confident spiritual relationship with God; (d) faith and love are the summary of God's commands; (e) obedience to those demands is the basis for living in God through Christ; (f) the gift of the Spirit assures the Christian of God's presence in his daily life."

Verse 19

[Καὶ] ἐν τούτῳ γνωσόμεθα ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμέν, καὶ ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὴν καρδίαν ἡμῶν

Verses 19 and 20 can be understood properly only if they are read together.

The case for inclusion or omission of καὶ is similar to that in v. 13.

The 'in this' looks back to what John has just said in vv. 16-18. "In this, the consciousness of active and sincere love of the brethren, resting upon and moulded by the love of Christ." Westcott.

γνωσόμεθα Verb, fut midd indic, 1 pl
γινώσκω

The future tense points forward to some future time of crisis of confidence or of faith – 'Can I be sure I am his?'

ἔμπροσθεν prep + gen before, in front of
πείσομεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl πειθω
persuade, convince, assure

"The many conflicting interpretations of this passage spring out of the different translations of (i) the verb πείσομεν, and (ii) the double conjunction or relative ὅτι (ὁ τι)." Westcott. Smalley thinks that the second ὅτι should be regarded as the neuter of the relative pronoun ὅστις ('who/which') and directly associated with the following ἐάν. The meaning then becomes '(in) whatever (matters)' (so Westcott), or, as in RSV, NIV, 'whenever'. Westcott says that πείσομεν may be either 'persuade' or 'assure'. Smalley favours the sense, 'satisfy' or 'set at ease' (cf. Matt 28:14). He writes, "John is saying that loving behaviour is a means of being reassured in the searching presence of God."

Verse 20

ὅτι ἐάν καταγινώσκη ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν καὶ γινώσκει πάντα.

ὅτι ἐάν Westcott understands this to mean 'wherinssoever,' Smalley as 'whenever.'

καταγινώσκω condemn

The internal judgment of conscience. cf. Gal 2:11.

The exegetical difficulties involved in this verse caused the second ὅτι (read by $\aleph B C K L$, et al.), to be omitted by A Vg, et al. But precisely because of its difficulty the inclusion of ὅτι is obviously original.

μείζων, ον greater, greatest

"The meaning of the whole passage will be: The sense within us of a sincere love for the brethren, which is the sign of God's presence with us, will enable us to stay the accusations of our conscience, whatever they may be, because God, who gives us the love, and so blesses us with His fellowship, is greater than our heart; and He, having perfect knowledge, forgives all on which the heart sadly dwells." Westcott. Cf. Paul's statement in 1 Cor 4:3-5. The thought of vv 19-20 will reappear in vv 22b-24.

Verse 21

Ἀγαπητοί, ἐάν ἡ καρδία [ἡμῶν] μὴ καταγινώσκη, παρρησίαν ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεόν,

ἀγαπητός, η, ον beloved

The great majority of MSS include ἡμῶν after καρδία but there are significant omissions (A B Ψ 33 436 et al).

"It does not imply a claim to sinlessness, nor yet an insensibility to the heinousness of sin, but the action of a lively faith which retains a real sense of fellowship with God, and this carries with it confidence and peace."

Westcott.

Marshall writes, "If we can set our hearts at rest by remembering that God is greater than our hearts and knows everything, then our hearts will no longer condemn us, and we shall be able to approach God with boldness."

παρρησια, ας f **boldness, assurance**

"The thought here is of the boldness with which the son appears before the Father, and not that with which the accused appears before the Judge." Westcott.

Smalley comments, "The child of God, who walks in the light and obeys the love command (cf. 1:7; 2:6, 10), has the privilege of 'bold speech' in the presence of God. But he also possesses the certainty that God hears and answers prayer (v 22)."

Verse 22

καὶ ὃ ἐὰν αἰτῶμεν λαμβάνομεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ὅτι τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ τηροῦμεν καὶ τὰ ἄρεστὰ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ποιοῦμεν.

αἰτεω **ask, request**

Cf. John 14:14; 16:23, also 15:16.

ἐντολή, ης f **command, order**

τηρεω **keep, observe**

"The answer to prayer is given not as a reward for meritorious action, but because the prayer itself rightly understood coincides with God's will (comp. John 8:29; 11:42). The sole object of the believer is to do thoroughly the part which has been assigned to him: his petitions are directed to this end and so are necessarily granted. Comp John 15:7."

Westcott.

ἄρεστος, η, ον **pleasing**

Marshall writes, "John's purpose is to encourage us to enter fully into the filial relationship in which God delights to hear and answer the requests of his children. The more fully we enter into that relationship, the more will our asking be in accordance with his will." Again, cf. John 15:7.

Verse 23

καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα πιστεύσωμεν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἔδωκεν ἐντολὴν ἡμῖν.

The *one* command is then described as having two facets, but they remain facets of the one command.

πιστεω **believe (in), have faith (in)**

Cf. Jn 6:29. This is the first occurrence of πιστεω in this letter (99 occurrences in John's Gospel), though it will now occur again in 4:1, 16; 5:1, 5, 10, 13.

For the aorist subjunctive ἵνα πιστεύσωμεν (B K L, et al), some MSS (e.g. Ⲛ A C) substitute the present subjunctive, ἵνα πιστεύωμεν, which has virtually the same meaning. Either reading makes sense in the context, but the aorist is perhaps original.

ὄνομα, τος n **name**

To 'believe in the name' suggests a meaning close to ὁμολογεῖν in 2:23 (cf. 4:2-3, 15). It "implies a confession of his character and authority ... as truly Son of God and Messiah." Smalley.

ἀλλήλων, οισ, ους see v.11

Cf. 4:7,11,12; 2 Jn 5; Jn 13:34; 15:12,17.

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s διδομι

Smalley concludes, "John has thus provided his readers with what Maurice (214) calls two 'counter-signs,' to distinguish the true child of God from the offspring of the devil (cf. v 10): right belief (in Jesus as both man and God), and right behaviour (expressed in terms of obedience; in particular, and following the example of Jesus mentioned in v 16, obedience to the love command). In this way a distinction is clearly drawn yet again between orthodox and heterodox members within or around the Johannine community."

Verse 24

καὶ ὁ τηρῶν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ· καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν.

Cf. Jn 15, also the prophetic promise in Ezek 37:27 and its ultimate fulfilment in Rev 21:3. Smalley comments, "The point which John is making in the first part of this verse, that obedience and reciprocal indwelling (between God and the believer) are inextricably associated, has been anticipated to some extent in earlier parts of this letter (cf. 2:5, 24, 27–29; 3:6, 9, 10, 18–19; and, for the notion of 'obedient reciprocity' with reference to the Father-Son relationship, see John 10:37–38; 12:48–49; 14:10–11)."

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s διδωμι

Westcott links the 'in this' to the first half of the verse, writing, "The love which the Christian feels and which is the spring of his obedience, assures him of God's fellowship with him. In other words, God has given him of His Spirit."

Smalley says that this is an unlikely meaning. He argues (as does Marshall) that the reference here is to the internal witness of the Spirit without explaining precisely how that is manifest. Smalley writes, "Like Paul, John here regards the witness of the Spirit as a source of confidence, when this is required (Rom 8:14–16; cf. 1 John 3:19–20)."

Day 1163: 1 John 4:1–6**Verse 1–6**

Having mentioned the Spirit, John now goes on to distinguish the Spirit of God from false spirits. This was probably necessary in the light of false teachers who claimed spiritual inspiration. Smalley comments, "Evidently both groups in the community, orthodox and heretical, were ready to claim 'spiritual inspiration' in support of their respective positions. The writer is therefore anxious to establish the means for discriminating between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (cf. v 6b), a concern no doubt increased by the presence of heretical schismatics around his church. He does this in 4:1–6 by highlighting an essential criterion of faith. Already John has mentioned righteousness (2:29; 3:10) and love (3:14; cf. 4:8) as moral tests for recognizing the genuine believer. Now he applies the theological test: a right confession of Jesus (vv 2–3; cf. 3:23). By this means those who claimed to be 'prophets' (v 1) could be authenticated, and the faith of any who professed allegiance to Christ could be established (v 6)."

Verse 1

Ἀγαπητοί, μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε, ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν, ὅτι πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον see 3:2

"There are many spiritual powers active among men ... All such spirits are partial revelations of the one spirit of evil which become (so to speak) embodied in men." Westcott.

δοκιμάζω test, examine, prove, discern

Cf. 1 Cor 12:1–3; 14:29–31; 1 Thess 5:20f. The injunction assumes a gift of discernment possessed, at least in measure, by all Christians.

ψευδοπροφητης, ου m false prophet

"through whom false spirits speak, as the Spirit speaks through true prophets (2 Peter 1:21; 2:1)." Westcott.

ἐξεληλύθασιν Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl
ἐξέρχομαι

"The words evidently refer to external circumstances vividly present to St John's mind. They point, as it appears, to the great outbreak of the Gentile pseudo-Christianity which is vaguely spoken of as Gnosticism, the endeavour to separate the 'ideas' of the Faith from the facts of the historic Redemption." Westcott. Cf. 2:18–19.

Verse 2

ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκετε τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ·
πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν
ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν,

ὁμολογεω confess, declare

"The test of the presence of the Divine Spirit is the confession of the Incarnation, or, more exactly, of the Incarnate Saviour... The Incarnate Saviour is the pledge of the complete redemption and perfection of man, of the restoration of 'the body' to its proper place as the perfect organ of the spirit. Hence the Divine Spirit must bear witness to Him."

Westcott. Cf. 2 John 7, also 1 Jn 5:6.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature
ἐληλυθότα Perfect active participle, m acc s
ἐρχομαι

"The construction of these words is not quite clear. Three ways of taking them are possible.

(i) The direct object may be Ἰησοῦν and χριστὸν ἐν σ. ἐλ. a secondary predicate: 'confesseth Jesus as Christ and a Christ come in the flesh'; (ii) The direct object may be Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν and ἐν σ. ἐλ. a secondary predicate: 'confesseth Jesus Christ, Him who is known by this full name, as come in the flesh.' (iii) The whole phrase may form a compound direct object: 'confesseth Him, whose nature and work is described by the phrase, 'Jesus Christ come in the flesh!'. The corresponding clause in v.3 Ἰησοῦν which gives the person and not any statement about the person as the object of confession is in favour of the last view." Westcott.

Smalley writes, "Here is the heart of the orthodox acknowledgment about Jesus (cf. 2:23); and by setting out this test John guards against *two* possible heretical opinions about Jesus: that he was only divine *or* merely human. The author also shows that the truly Christian confession is one which ultimately involves a person (faith in Jesus, the incarnate Christ), and not a doctrine concerning that person (faith in the Incarnation)."

And Marshall comments, "John's test is not an infallible one. Jesus himself had to protest against people who called him 'Lord' and yet did not do what he said (Mt 7:21-23; Lk 6:46).

Mere confession with the mouth is not necessarily a guide to belief of the heart.

John's test is accordingly relevant to a particular situation in which it was possible to regard certain people as inspired by the spirit of evil because of their faulty confession. In other circumstances a different form of words may be the test point. Ultimately, however, the whole of the Epistle furnishes the characteristics of genuine Christianity: faith, love, and righteousness are all relevant to the question, and concentration on any of them to the exclusion of the others is bound to be misleading."

Verse 3

καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν
Ἰησοῦν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν· καὶ τοῦτο
ἐστίν τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου, ὃ ἀκηκόατε
ὅτι ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστίν
ἤδη.

In place of μὴ ὁμολογεῖ a few MSS have the interesting reading λυεῖ, meaning in context 'annul Jesus.' Marshall comments, "While this rendering has not found its way into the English versions of the New Testament ... it has found favour among commentators. Nevertheless, it is probably due to a gloss or marginal comment by a scribe who was trying to bring out the precise way in which Jesus was denied."

"The substance of the confession which has been given in detail in the former verse is gathered up in the single human name of the Lord. To 'confess Jesus,' which in the connexion can only mean to confess 'Jesus is Lord' (1 Cor 12:3; Rom 10:9), is to recognise divine sovereignty in One Who is truly man, or, in other words, to recognise the union of the divine and human in one Person, a truth which finds its only adequate expression in the fact of the Incarnation." Westcott.

ἀντιχριστος, ου m see 2:18

Cf. 2:18-19, 22. John is "condemning those heretical beliefs, within and beyond his community, which amount to a determined and antichristian rebellion against God (v 3b)."
Smalley.

ἀκηκόατε Verb, perf act indic, 2 pl ἀκουω
ἤδη adv now, already

Verse 4

ὁμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστε, τεκνία, καὶ νενικήκατε αὐτούς, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν ἢ ὁ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

τεκνιον, ου n see 3:18

νικαω conquer, overcome

Cf. 2:13. Smalley comments, "The perfect tense, νενικήκατε, suggests not only a decisive victory already accomplished, but also one which has continuing effects in the present." These believers are on the winning side.

μειζων, ον greater, greatest
ἢ or, than

The Christian possesses the Spirit of the Living God and this possession is the guarantee of victory. God himself shall have the last word. Indeed, in a definitive sense that victory has already been accomplished in Christ and it is this reality of which the Spirit is the seal.

Verse 5

αὐτοὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου εἰσὶν· διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου λαλοῦσιν καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν ἀκούει.

λαλεω speak, talk

The character of their speech and the character of their hearers are determined by their own character. Cf. John 15:19a and contrast 7:7; 15:18.

Verse 6

ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν· ὁ γινώσκων τὸν θεὸν ἀκούει ἡμῶν, ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἀκούει ἡμῶν. ἐκ τούτου γινώσκομεν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης.

Westcott says that the transition from ὁμεῖς to ἡμεῖς indicates that this verse is not speaking of the Christian generally but of "those whose work it is to unfold the divine message." He continues, "The world listens to those who express its own thoughts; the Christian listens to those who teach him more of God." Smalley, however, thinks that the ἡμεῖς is simply John's way of referring to himself and his readers.

Cf. John 10:4, 16, 27; also 8:47a; 18:37b.

Westcott suggests that the present participle γινωσκων "describes a knowledge apprehended as progressive and not complete."

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality
πλανη, ης f error, deceit, deception

In context, the bold assertion with which this verse concludes refers to the apostolic testimony: if a person possesses the Spirit of truth they show a readiness to listen to the apostolic teaching (cf. Acts 2:42). The same is demonstrated today by an eagerness to submit to and learn from the word of God. Marshall comments, "Hence it is by their response to the preaching of the church that it is possible to discern those who are directed by the Spirit of truth, i.e. the Holy Spirit, and the spirit of error."

Day 1164: 1 John 4:7-12**Verse 4:7-5:4**

Smalley divides this section as follows:

vv 7-10, The source of love;

vv 11-16, The inspiration of love;

vv 17-20, The practice of love;

4:21-5:4, The command of love.

Verse 7

Ἀγαπητοί, ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται καὶ γινώσκει τὸν θεόν.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον see 3:2

The form of address, ἀγαπητοί, reflects the subject.

"John begins his appeal for love, as a demand which is laid upon every believer who seeks to live as a true child of God, by reminding his readers of the dominical command to 'love one another' (see John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17)." Smalley.

ἀλληλων, οισ, ους one another

ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν "Love comes from God. It has its origin in God and belongs to the divine sphere." Marshall.

γεγέννηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s

γεννωω bear; pass be born

"He that loveth derives his spiritual being from God, and of necessity therefore is in sympathy with Him, and knows Him, that is, recognises every revelation which shews more of Him (v.6)." Westcott.

Marshall adds, "To be sure, the statement is open to misunderstanding. One might conclude that anybody who shows love is a child of God, regardless of whether he actually believes in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. This misunderstanding can only arise, however, if we take this statement and wrench it out of its context in the letter. John makes it plain enough elsewhere that the true child of God *both* believes *and* loves (3:23)."

Verse 8

ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν θεόν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν.

ἔγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s γινωσκω

Westcott suggests that the aorist means that this person did not know God "when he made profession of knowing Him. His acknowledgement of God (as at Baptism) was based on no true recognition of His nature."

θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν The claim is that *all* that God does he does out of love – he is completely loving.

Smalley comments, "To assert comprehensively that 'God is love' does not ignore or exclude the other attributes of his being to which the Bible as a whole bears witness; notably his justice and his truth (cf. Ps 89:14; Deut 32:4; Rom 3:21–26; John 17:17). God's judgment (his wrath), for example, is just as much a reality as his love (cf. Isa 54:8; Rev 6:12–17). But theologically these cannot be opposed to each other. Such characteristics of God as his justice and his truth must ultimately be *related* to his essential nature as love, and may in the end be perceived in terms of his loving nature (see further, Stott, 160–61). Such teaching belongs, indeed, to 1 John itself, where we read of God's holiness (1:5), justice (1:9) and truth (5:20)."

'Love' does not define God: God defines love.

Verse 9

ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερῶθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι· αὐτοῦ.

ἐφανερῶθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
φανερῶ reveal, make known, make evident

"In the retrospect of His completed work on earth the Lord says: ἐφανερῶσα σου τὸ ὄνομα (John 17:6), that is 'the Father's name,' the revelation of love." Westcott.

"*in us*: not simply 'towards us' as the objects to whom the love was directed, but 'in us,' in us believers, as the medium in which it was revealed and in which it was effective... The Christian shares the life of Christ, and so becomes himself a secondary sign of God's love... The manifestation of the love of God *to* man becomes a living power as a manifestation of His love *in* man." Westcott. Smalley similarly writes, "The sense of ἐν ἡμῖν, in part, is thus that the love of God disclosed by Jesus indwells the Church, and creates the basis for a mutual and ongoing relationship of love between the Godhead and the Christian."

μονογενῆς, εἰς only, unique

Cf. Jn 3:16.

ἀπέσταλκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s
ἀποστελλω send

ζῶ live

δι· αὐτοῦ he is the cause and source of our life. The verb ζήσωμεν 'that we might live' stresses the *activity*, and not solely the status.

Verse 10

ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήκαμεν τὸν θεόν, ἀλλ· ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἰλασμόν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.

ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη "There can be no explanation or definition of true love which does not start from God's love." Marshall.

ἠγαπήκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl
ἀγαπαω

Smalley writes, "In place of ἠγαπήκαμεν ('we have loved'), which is read by B, most witnesses have the verb in the aorist: ἠγαπήσαμεν ('we loved'). The difference in form and meaning is slight; but, despite the weight of evidence on the other side, the reading of B is probably correct and certainly appropriate to the context. John is saying in v 10 that love is primarily known through God's historical act of revelation in Christ (he "sent" his Son, ἠγάπησεν, aorist), rather than through man's continuing love (ἠγαπήκαμεν, perfect) for God."

ἰλασμός, οὗ μ means by which sins are forgiven

Cf. 2:2.

ἁμαρτία, ἀφ' ἧς f sin

Some find it difficult to reconcile the picture of a loving God with that the demand for propitiation. James Denny (*The Death of Christ*) writes, "So far from finding any kind of contrast between love and propitiation, the apostle can convey no idea of love to anyone except by pointing to the propitiation – love is what is manifested there: and he can give no account of the propitiation but by saying, 'Behold what manner of love.' For him, to say 'God is love' is exactly the same as to say, 'God has in his Son made atonement for the sin of the world.' If the propitiatory death of Jesus is eliminated from the love of God, it might be unfair to say that the love of God is robbed of all meaning, but it is certainly robbed of its apostolic meaning. It has no longer that meaning which goes deeper than sin, sorrow, and death, and which recreates life in the adoring joy, wonder, and purity of the first Epistle of John."

Verse 11

Ἀγαπητοί, εἰ οὕτως ὁ θεὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν.

οὕτως **thus, in this way**

Cf. the use of οὕτως in John 3:16.

ὀφείλω **see 3:16**

"The love which God has not only shewn but given to us (v.1) becomes a constraining motive for action." Westcott.

Verse 12

θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται· ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν τετελειωμένη ἐστίν.

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν **no one, nothing**
πώποτε **adv ever, at any time**

τεθέαται **Verb, perf midd/pass dep indic, 3 s θεαομαι see**

Cf. Jn 1:18. John may be writing against the background of false teachers who claimed to have had a direct vision of God.

μένω **remain, stay, abide**

τετελειωμένη **Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s**
τελειώω **make perfect, complete**

"It is through man that 'the love of God' finds its fulfilment on earth." Westcott.
Marshall understands this phrase to mean, "When we love others, God's love for us has reached its full effect in creating the same kind of love as his in us."

Both this verse and John 1:18 indicate how God makes himself known. No-one has ever seen God, but God has revealed himself in his Son (Jn 1:18, cf. Jn 1:14). Here John's argument is taken a step further. No-one has ever seen God, but his character is revealed in the love his children have one for another (cf. v.9 above). Smalley comments, "Jesus, by his love, reveals the Father's love; and in the same way the members of the Johannine community, by their mutual love, manifest to others the love of the God who dwells within them."

Day 1165: 1 John 4:13-16a

Verses 13-16

Smalley writes, "John has already appealed for right belief (4:1–6) and mutual loving (vv 7–12) from his readers. In vv 13–16 the ideas of faith and love are related to the life of the Christian in terms of affirmation, rather than exhortation. We can *know* that we live in God, and God in us, as we share in the gift of the Spirit (v 13), acknowledge the work of God in Jesus Christ (vv 14–15), and dwell in love (v 16). Here are the grounds (not the conditions) of spiritual assurance."

Verse 13

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν.

Cf. 3:24.

δέδωκεν **Verb, perf act indic, 3 s διδομι**

Smalley comments, "The genitive ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ (literally, 'out of his Spirit') is partitive (cf. Matt 25:28; John 1:16; 6:11; and contrast 3:24b). This is to say, Christians receive from God a share (only) in the Spirit who fills the whole Church... The presence of the Spirit is demonstrated by the confession of true belief (vv. 14,15). But ἐν τούτῳ can also look back to vv 7–12, and especially v 12. 'We know that God lives in us, and we in him, because we possess the spirit of love which flows from him'... As we live in God through the Spirit (cf. John 3:5, 8), and he in us, we are called and enabled to love (vv 12, 16) and to believe (v 15)."

Verse 14

καὶ ἡμεῖς τεθεάμεθα καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν
ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ἀπέσταλκεν τὸν υἱὸν
σωτῆρα τοῦ κόσμου.

Stott notes that in vv 13 and 14, taken together, there is a reference to all three persons of the Trinity. The *Father* has sent his *Son* into the world as Saviour, and we can bear witness to this fact (v 14). But God has also sent the *Spirit* to be with the Church as a witness to the truth of the Father's love and indwelling (v 13).

τεθεάμεθα Verb, perf midd/pass dep indic,
1 pl θεασμαι see

μαρτυρω bear witness, testify

Cf. 1:2. Westcott suggests that this affirmation is not exclusive to the apostles but that this "vision and witness remains an abiding endowment of the living Body", i.e. the church. Marshall also takes this view.

ἀπέσταλκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s
ἀποστελλω send

"The testimony is borne not simply to the historical fact (v.10, ἀπεστειλεν), but (as in v.9) to the permanence of Christ's mission. Of this believers have direct knowledge."
Westcott.

σωτηρ, ηρος m saviour

Cf. John 4:42.

Verse 15

ὃς ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ
υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ μένει καὶ
αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ θεῷ.

ὃς ἐὰν whoever

ὁμολογεω confess, declare

Cf. 2:23. "The fact that the writer returns in this v to the thought of orthodox 'confession' (see 4:2–3), suggests that he still has in mind the need to resist the heterodox members of his community." Smalley.

Verse 16a

καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐγνώκαμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν
τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχει ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν.

ἐγνώκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl
γινωσκω

πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)

Smalley writes, "The verbs 'know' and 'trust' (ἐγνώκαμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν), the second of which reinforces the first, are both in the perfect tense, denoting an action in the past which has continuing effects in the present. John asserts that true believers can be sure of the reality of God's love, and rely on it, because they have personally experienced it."

ἐν ἡμῖν "It is clear from the context that the love here spoken of is the love which God has and shews towards man. But St John adds a second thought to that of God's love towards man (εἰς ἡμᾶς). The love of God becomes a power in the Christian Body (ἐν ἡμῖν). Believers are the sphere in which it operates and makes itself felt in the world (2 Cor. 4:10f.). Comp. v.9." Westcott (so, similarly, Marshall and Smalley).